

## **Don't wait for a second wave**

### **Press release from the French National Academy of Medicine**

September 28, 2020

The probability of a second wave of Covid-19 epidemic, more important than in March-April and which would overwhelm our control capabilities, can no longer be ruled out:

- The resurgence of the epidemic, observed since July, was followed by a geographical expansion and an acceleration, confirmed in France and in other countries during September, with worrying consequences on the number of hospitalizations, intensive care admissions and deaths;
- Since only a portion of the population regularly complies with the preventive measures, transmission of the virus is maintained throughout the country and is favoured in large urban areas, particularly in university cities where the student life fails to observe the restrictions;
- To the carelessness of young people, aware that they do not belong to the groups most at risk but are often unaware of their role in intergenerational transmission, is added the deleterious effect of discourse contesting the effectiveness and necessity of prevention measures or decrying their compulsory nature in the name of libertarian principles;
- The "test - trace - isolate" strategy, undermined by a doctrine that encouraged as many people as possible to be tested, has become ineffective because of the overcrowding of diagnosis and screening channels, leading to unacceptable delays in the delivery of results;
- Rapid tests, saliva samples and antigenic tests are slow to be put on the market and integrated into the diagnosis and screening strategy;
- The approach of winter, which will favour the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, as well as other respiratory viruses, makes the current dynamics of the epidemic more worrisome;
- The level of herd immunity in the population is far too low to hope to contain a further spread of the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic, the vaccine prospects being as remote as uncertain.

The question now is whether it will be possible to avoid a second, if not widespread, at least partial containment, which would inexorably worsen the economic and social impact of the health crisis.

Knowing that the effect of effective preventive measures only becomes apparent after a delay of 2 to 3 weeks, **the National Academy of Medicine recommends the urgent implementation of the following measures:**

- To restore confidence and to generate public acceptance by supporting government communication based on the advice of a panel of citizens to ensure that the objectives are clear, that the terms used are understandable, and that the recommended measures are coherent and not contradictory;

- To appeal to the collective responsibility of each citizen, from childhood, by promoting an altruistic and supportive behavior: "protect yourself to protect others";
- To remind young adults of the need to respect barrier gestures by wearing a mask in all social and work environments and of the risk, now proven, of contracting a serious form of the virus, of having sequels, even after a mild form, and of transmitting the virus within their family, to their relatives and to their work colleagues;
- To avoid the closure of establishments and to give priority to the strict application of mandatory measures, needing to be extended to all places open to the public: stores, restaurants, bars, museums, theatres, etc.
- To constantly inform about the need of isolating oneself at the onset of symptoms suggestive of Covid-19, without waiting for the result of the confirmatory test;
- To analyse the current use of the StopCovid application and to identify ways to develop it.